

Message Text

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17

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

OMB-01 AID-05 SAJ-01 SAM-01 EB-07 /078 W

----- 005191

R 281431Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7538

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS:PFOR, UR, CH, DM

SUBJ: PRES KEREKOU PRESENTS DEMAND FOR SINO-SOVIET ASSISTANCE
IN PUBLIC HEALTH

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT KEREKOU CONVOKED PRC AND SOVIET AMBS
AUG 27 TO ACCOMPANY HIM ON A VISIT TO THE OVERCROWDED COTONOU
MATERNITY CLINIC. AT END OF VISIT, KEREKOU PRESENTED OUT-
RIGHT DEMAND FOR ASSISTANCE IN CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FACILITIES.
BOTH AMBASSADORS GAVE NON-COMMITTAL RESPONSES, WHICH LED KEREKOU
TO CAST ASPERSIONS ON THEIR INTENTIONS TO AID THEIR "SOCIALIST
BROTHERS" IN DAHOMEY. END SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING A REPORT BY MIN OF PUBLIC HEALTH BOURAIMA AT
THE WEEKLY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING AUG 27 ON THE SAD STATE
OF COTONOU MATERNITY CLINIC, PRES KEREKOU CONVOKED THE SOVIET
AND CHINESE AMBS TO ACCOMPANY HIM ON A TOUR OF THE CLINIC.
DURING THE EXCHANGE, BROADCAST LATER THAT DAY BY THE OFFICIAL
RADIO, KEREKOU EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD INVITED THE AMBS ALONG
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ON THE VISIT BECAUSE THEY ARE QUOTE REVOLUTIONARIES UNQTE

AND DAHOMEY COULD LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. IN ADDITION, KEREKOU SAID DAHOMEY LACKED THE RESOURCES TO IMPROVE THE MATERNITY CLINIC SO THE TWO SOCIALIST COUNTRIES "SHOULD HELP" BY PROVIDING NEW FACILITIES.

2. SOVIET AMB IVAN IL'IN STATED THAT FOLLOWING THE OCT REVOLUTION IN 1917, PUBLIC HEALTH CARE IN THE USSR WAS NOT ANY BETTER THAN THAT IN DAHOMEY TODAY, HOWEVER, THE USSR WISHED TO COOPERATE WITH DAHOMEY IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC HEALTH, AND HAS ALREADY GRANTED A NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TRAINING IN THE SOVIET UNION. MORE OF THESE TRAINEESHIPS WOULD SOON BE FORTHCOMING. THE DIR OF THE MATERNITY CLINIC REPLIED THE SOVIET AMB HAD NOT ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO THE REAL PROBLEM. TRAINING WAS FINE, BUT WHAT IS NEEDED ARE MODERN, LARGER FACILITIES. THEN PRES KEREKOU ADDED THAT HE HOPED SOVIET TRAINING COULD TAKE PLACE IN THE FUTURE ON DAHOMEAN SOIL. IN ADDITION, IN LIGHT OF WHAT THE USSR HAS DONE IN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES, THE SOVIETS SHOULD ASSIST DAHOMEY IN THE CONTRUCTION OF A NEW MATERNITY CLINIC. THEIR ASSISTANCE, DECLARED KEREKOU, WILL BE THE ONLY WAY THE SOVIETS CAN PROVE THEIR GOOD FAITH IN WANTING TO HELP DAHOMEY.

3. CHINESE AMB KU HSIAO-PO WAS EVEN MORE NON-COMMITTAL IN HIS REMARKS. HE STATED THAT THE PRC STILL FACES A LONG STRUGGLE TO BRING ITS OWN LEVEL OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES UP TO THAT OF THE REST OF THE WORLD. NONETHLESS, THE PRC IS PREPARED TO ASSIST DAHOMEY, AS SHOWN BY THE VISIT TO CHINA OF DAHOMEAN MIN OF PUBLIC HEALTH BOURAIMA LAST APRIL, WHICH WAS A STEP FORWARD IN THIS COOPERATION.

4. AS A FINALE, USING THE MATERNITY CLINIC AS AN EXAMPLE, KEREKOU LAUNCHED A TIRADE AGAINST THE FORMER DAHOMEAN POLITICAL LEADERS WHOM HE ACCUSED OF MISUSING GOVT FUNDS FOR THEIR OWN ENDS RATHER THAN BUILDING ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR PROVIDING SOCIAL SERVICES. USING THAT OPENING, KEREKOU TURNED BACK TO THE TWO AMBASSADORS AND CRITICIZED THEM FOR PAYING RENT ON THEIR CHANCERIES AND RESIDENCES TO FORMER POLITICIANS, INCLUDING ONE FORMER CHIEF OF STATE (READ EMILE ZINSOU, THE BETE NOIRE OF THE CURRENT REGIME). HE TOLD THE AMBASSADORS THAT INSTEAD OF SUPPORTING SUCH BANDITS AND THEREBY PROSTITUTING THEMSELVES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AS REPS OF SOCIALIST STATES, THEY SHOULD TAKE STEPS TO PROVIDE CONCRETE ASSISTANCE TO THE DAHOMEAN PEOPLE. WITH A FINAL FLOURISH, KEREKOU STATED THAT THE DAHOMEAN REVOLUTION REFUSED TO BE QTE REMOTED CONTROLLED FROM ABROAD UNQTE.

5. THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT OF THE VISIT TO THE CLINIC WAS VERY LOW KEY, MERELY REPORTING THAT THE TWO AMBASSADORS HAD REAFFIRMED THEIR GOVT'S STRONG DESIRE TO REINFORCE THE

COOPERATION EXISTING BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRIES AND DAHOMEY.

6. COMMENT: THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT KEREKOU HAS CONVOKED THE USSR AND PRC AMBS TO EXPRESS HIS DISPLEASURE WITH THEIR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN DAHOMEY. IN FACT, IT IS THE SECOND TIME FOR THE SOVIET AMB IL'IN, WHO ARRIVED IN MID-JUNE 75. HOWEVER, NONE OF THE PREVIOUS SESSIONS HAD BEEN SO PUBLIC AND SO OPENLY CRITICAL OF THE PAUCITY OF ASSISTANCE DAHOMEY RECEIVES FROM THE COMMUNISTS. THE VISIT MAY VERY WELL HAVE BEEN SPUR OF THE MOMENT IDEA BROUGHT UP DURING COUNCIL OF MINISTERS DISCUSSION OF MATERNITY CLINIC CONDITIONS. SUCH DIRECT TACTICS ARE UNLIKELY TO WIN KEREKOU ANY NEW PROMISES OF SUPPORT FROM THE USSR AND PRC, BUT THEY ARE USEFUL IN FOCUSING ATTENTION ON THE TWO COUNTRIES' MINISCULE AID PROGRAMS. KEREKOU'S REMARK THAT THE DAHOMEAN REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE CONTROLLED BY FOREIGNERS IS THE STRONGEST ATTACK YET AGAINST THE "SOCIALIST BROTHERS" AND INDICATES FURTHER THAT THEIR LACK OF COOPERATION IS NOT WEARING WELL WITHIN THE UPPER ECHELONS OF THE MRGD.
GRAHL

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